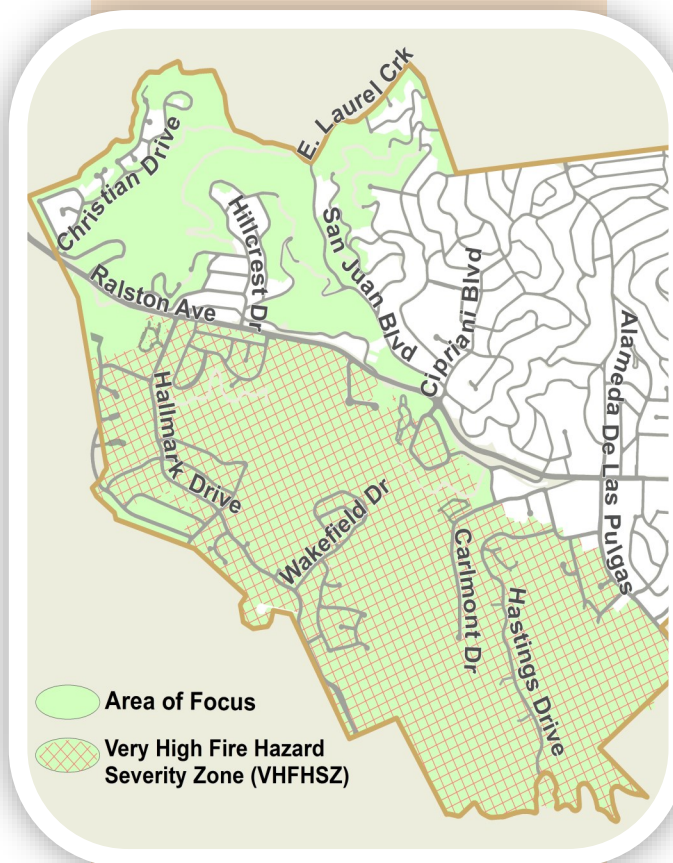




The goal of the Belmont Fire Protection District's Vegetation Management Program is to reduce potential fire hazards within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas of Belmont due to the accumulation of weeds, dry vegetation and/or rubbish. The program works in conjunction with the California Fire and Building Codes.



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Belmont Fire Protection District Vegetation Management Program

Newbury Park, CA
2013



Belmont Fire Protection District
Proudly serving the communities of
Belmont and the Harbor Industrial Area
(HIA) since 1926

Oakland Hills Firestorm
1991



Understanding the Threat

Fire season is now a year-round reality in many areas of California and the San Francisco Bay Area, requiring firefighters and residents to be on heightened alert for the threat of wildfire throughout the year. The Belmont Fire Protection District takes every precaution to help protect you and your property from wildfire. However, the reality is that in a major wildfire, there is simply not enough fire engines or firefighters to defend every home.

If you live next to a natural area, the wildland urban interface (WUI), you must provide firefighters with the defensible space they need to protect your home. The buffer zone you create by removing weeds, brush and other vegetation helps to keep the fire away from your home and reduces the risks from flying embers. Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE ZONES



Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs or any wildland area that surrounds it.

Zone 1— extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove dead plants, grass, and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, swing sets etc...

Zone 2— extends an additional 70 feet from Zone 1.

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 3 inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs & trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs & trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches if erosion control is an issue.

What Does the Law Say?

California Government Code 51182 requires that any person that owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains an occupied dwelling or structure in, upon, or adjoining any land covered with flammable material designated as a very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) shall at all times maintain 100 feet of defensible space.

Belmont Municipal Code Section 7-401 classifies nuisances (in part) as follows:

Property where: Overgrown vegetation; dead, decayed, diseased, or hazardous trees, firewood; weeds and other vegetation is likely to harbor rats, vermin or nuisances or may be a fire hazard.

California Building Code Requirements

All new buildings in the WUI area that have applied for a permit after July 1, 2008 must follow the code requirements found in Chapter 7A of the California Building Code.

In addition to vegetation management, the buildings must be constructed of ignition-resistant materials and methods. Examples include a stucco exterior, sealed eaves, and Class A, fire rated roofs. Contact the Building Division at (650) 595-7422 for additional information.